

# FACT SHEET



Former Diller Battery Site  
Des Moines, Iowa

June 2002

## INTRODUCTION

The U. S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) Region 7 continues to oversee Superfund activities at the Former Diller Battery site, 701 Corning Avenue, Des Moines, Iowa. This fact sheet provides an update of site activities.

## CURRENT STATUS

The EPA and several potentially responsible parties, including the city of Des Moines, Union Pacific Railroad Company, and Polk County signed an agreement to clean up the site. Site work is scheduled to begin in July 2002 and is expected to take two months to complete.

The site work will consist of excavating and disposing of the contaminated soil on the site. The contaminated soil will be taken off site and disposed of in an approved landfill. Clean soil will be placed in the excavated areas and vegetated.

The contaminants of concern at the site are lead and polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbons or PAHs. Lead and PAHs have been found in surface soils, on the site, above health-based levels.

## SITE BACKGROUND

The site is in a commercial area of north-central Des Moines. It is bordered by a residential neighborhood to the north, light industry to the east and south, and Riverview Park Lake to the west.

In 1953, the facility was operated jointly by Diller Battery and Span-O-Life Battery, and by Span-O-Life Battery only in 1954. From 1955 to 1964, the Hunter Manufacturing Company manufactured beds at the site. This part of the site, which includes a small metal storage shed and a concrete pad, was fenced in 1997 by the city of Des Moines.

Another part of the site, located northeast of the former Diller Battery Company property at the southwest corner of 6<sup>th</sup> Avenue and Boston Avenue, was previously the location of a school. The school was demolished in 1994. Fill dirt may have been moved from the Diller Battery property onto the cleared lot.

In 1995, the Iowa Department of Natural Resources collected soil samples at the site after the city of Des Moines notified them of potential contamination. Elevated levels of lead were found in the soil. EPA collected soil samples in June 1996 and found elevated levels of lead and PAHs.

In September 1998, the city of Des Moines and the Union Pacific Railroad Company, two of the owners of the site, signed an agreement known as an Administrative Order on Consent, to assess the contamination at the site and identify alternatives to address the contamination. Polk County also agreed to contribute money toward costs associated with the site assessment.

The city of Des Moines and the Union Pacific Railroad took additional soil samples in May 1999 to assess the extent of the contamination. The samples indicate that elevated levels of lead are present within the fenced part of the site where the battery factory was located. Elevated levels of PAHs were found over the entire surface area of the site. The source of the PAHs is unclear.

#### **ADDITIONAL INFORMATION**

An Administrative Record File consisting of site-related documents has been prepared for the site and is available for public review. The Administrative Record File can be viewed at the following locations during normal business hours:

Des Moines North Side  
Public Library  
3516 5<sup>th</sup> Avenue  
Des Moines, Iowa

EPA Region 7 Docket Room  
901 N. 5<sup>th</sup> Street  
Kansas City, Kansas

EPA encourages community members to review the Administrative Record File. If you have questions about this fact sheet or need additional information about the site, please contact:

Hattie Thomas  
Community Involvement Coordinator  
EPA Region 7  
Office of External Programs  
901 North 5<sup>th</sup> Street  
Kansas City, Kansas 66101  
1-913-551-7003 or  
toll free at 1-800-223-0425  
E-mail: [thomas.hattie@epa.gov](mailto:thomas.hattie@epa.gov)